

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EDITORIAL IN IRISH TIMES, JANUARY 17, 1978

FOLLOWING EDITORIAL APPEARED IN THE IRISH TIMES, JANUARY
17, 1978 UNDER HEADING THE AMERICAN VOICE:

WASHINGTON'S COMMENTS ON ITALIAN POLITICS LAST WEEK CAN
HARDLY HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO PREVENT THE RESIGNATION OF
MR. ANDREOTTI'S MINORITY CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT
YESTERDAY. THAT HAD BECOME INEVITABLE. BUT THE STATE
DEPARTMENT'S INTERVENTION MUST HAVE BEEN DEVISED TO CAUSE
MORE THAN ANNOYANCE NOT ONLY IN ITALY AND NOT EXCLUSIVELY
AMONG COMMUNISTS. THE US, IT WILL BE REMEMBERED, SAID
BLUNTLY THAT IT WOULD LIKE TO SEE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN
ANY WEST EUROPEAN COUNTRY REDUCED, AND, SPECIFICALLY, THAT
THE ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY "DOES NOT SHARE DOMOCRATIC
VALUES AND INTERESTS."

NOBODY IS SURPRISED THAT WASHINGTON HOLDS THESE VIEWS;
BUT THE TIMING AND DELIBERATE NATURE OF THEIR PUBLICA-
TION WERE MANIFESTLY SIGNIFICANT. THE ANDREOTTI
GOVERNMENT FELL BECAUSE THE RELATIONSHIP WHICH ENABLED
IT TO SURVIVE WAS TORPEDOED BY THAT RELATIONSHIP'S
GUARANTORS - THE COMMUNISTS, WHO CAME A CLOSE SECOND
TO THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IN THE 1976 ELECTION.

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NEITHER PARTY COULD GOVERN UNLESS IT REACHED SOME
DEGREE OF ACCOMMODATION WITH THE OTHER.

FOR A TIME THE COMMUNISTS WERE WILLING TO KEEP THE
GOVERNMENT IN BEING ALTHOUGH THEY WERE REFUSED ANY
MINISTERIAL PARTICIPATION. THEY WERE CONSULTED
INFORMALLY ON MAJOR POLICY DECISIONS, AND ABSTAINED

DURING CRITICAL PARLIAMENTARY VOTES. IN THE LAST FEW MONTHS, HOWEVER, THEY HAVE BEEN CALLING FOR AN "EMERGENCY" GOVERNMENT, IN WHICH THEY WOULD BE REPRESENTED: MR. ANDREOTTI REFUSED. BUT IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT PRESIDENT LEONE WILL ASK HIM TO SUCCEED HIMSELF. HE WILL BE ABLE TO DO THIS ONLY IF HE COMES TO ANOTHER ARRANGEMENT WITH THE COMMUNISTS, WHICH AGAIN WOULD NOT INVOLVE PORTFOLIOS BUT MIGHT LEAD TO CLOSER CONSULTATION ON POLICY DECISIONS.

NEITHER THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS NOR THE COMMUNISTS ARE ANXIOUS FOR A GENERAL ELECTION AT THIS TIME, WHICH IS WHY THE CRISIS PROBABLY WILL BE RESOLVED AFTER AN INTENSIVE SPELL OF RITUAL BARGAINING. IF THIS WAS THE AMERICAN READING OF EVENTS, PRESIDENT CARTER AND HIS ADVISERS MAY HAVE ARGUED THAT THEIR CALCULATED INTERVENTION, WHILE ATTRACTING A VOLLEY OF EUROPEAN BRICKBATS, MIGHT STIFFEN THE RESISTANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS TO COMMUNIST PRESSURE FOR ENLARGED INFLUENCE.

BUT WASHINGTON MAY WELL HAVE GUESSED WRONG. CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AS WELL AS COMMUNISTS HAVE SPOKEN UP AGAINST "CRUDE" INTERFERENCE: EVEN MR. BARRE, THE STAITD PRIME MINISTER OF FRANCE'S CENTRE-RIGHT GOVERNMENT, OBSERVED SCORNFULLY THAT NO DEMOCRATIC UNCLASSIFIED

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COUNTRY HAD TO RECEIVE LESSONS OR ADVICE FROM ANYONE. IT IS A FAIR GUESS THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S SERMON HAS DONE MORE TO OFFEND WEST EUROPEAN NATIONALISM THAN TO DAMAGE EUROCOMMUNISM - WHOSE SUPPORTERS, INDEED, ARE NOW IN A BETTER POSITION TO PREACH ABOUT AMERICAN MEDDLING, DOLLAR IMPERIALISM AND RELATED OBJECTS OF ABUSE. EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT ITALY NEEDS STABILITY AND ORDER, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ALIKE. THE AMERICANS, JUST NOW, ARE NOT HELPING HER TO FIND THEM. KRENE

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